

AMENDMENT(S) TO THE CLAIMS

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1. (Currently amended) Apparatus for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising a core server, the core server comprising:

means for receiving a request from a client for specified content;

means for communicating to the client the identity of a node server having the specified content stored thereon, thereby enabling the client to request transmission of the specified content from the node server; and

means for ascertaining that the node server transmitted the specified content to the client, wherein an owner of the node server is offered an incentive as compensation for transmission of the specified content to the client.

2. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the incentive varies in accordance with the bandwidth and/or latency performance of the node server in transmitting the specified content to the client.

3. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 2, wherein the incentive varies in accordance with the bandwidth and/or latency performance of the node server relative to the bandwidth and/or latency characteristics of one or more other node servers that can provide the specified content to the client.

4. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the incentive varies in accordance with the number and/or topological proximity of one or more other node servers that can provide the specified content to the client.

5. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the incentive varies in accordance with the time of day at which the node server transmits the specified content to the client.

6. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the means for ascertaining that the node server transmitted the specified content to the client further comprises means for obtaining information regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content.

7. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 6, wherein the means for obtaining information regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content further comprises means for obtaining information regarding when the content was delivered.

8. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 6, wherein the means for obtaining information regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content further comprises means for obtaining information regarding the bandwidth and/or latency performance associated with the transmission of the content.

9. (Currently amended) Apparatus as in Claim 1, the core server further comprising:

means for identifying a plurality of node servers within the network that have at least part of the specified content stored thereon;

means for selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers; and

means for communicating the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the specified content via the network from one or more of the candidate node servers.

10. (Currently amended) Apparatus as in Claim 9, the core server further comprising:

means for determining the location of the client within the network;

means for identifying the locations of the plurality of node servers that have at least part of the requested content stored thereon; and

wherein the means for selecting one or more candidate node servers further comprises means for selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that are determined to be topologically proximate to the client.

11. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 10, wherein the determination of topological proximity to the client is performed using a breadth-first search to identify node servers that satisfy a criterion regarding topological proximity to the client.

12. (Currently amended) Apparatus as in Claim 1, the core server further comprising:

means for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of the specified content; and

means for providing the specified content to the node server.

13. (Previously presented) Apparatus as in Claim 12, wherein the means for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of the specified content further comprises:

means for identifying the location of a prospective node server that desires to act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

means for identifying the location of one or more other existing node servers that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content; and

means for determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers, wherein the prospective node server is selected as a node server for distribution of the specified content if the

prospective node server satisfies a criterion regarding topological proximity to the existing node servers.

14. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 13, wherein the means for determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers is performed using an annealing method.

15. (Currently amended) Apparatus as in Claim 1, the core server further comprising:

means for storing data identifying available content that can be obtained by a client; and

means for providing an identification of available content to the client.

16. (Currently amended) Apparatus as in Claim 1, the core server further comprising means for storing data identifying the location of the node server.

17. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the content comprises visual content including moving images.

18. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the network is a computer network.

19. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 18, wherein the network is the Internet.

20. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the network is a television network.

21. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the network is a wireless communications network.

22. (Currently amended) ~~A system including an apparatus~~
Apparatus as in Claim 1, ~~wherein the apparatus is a core server,~~
~~the system~~ further comprising the node server, the node server comprising:

means for storing the specified content;

means for receiving a request to transmit the specified content to the client; and

means for transmitting the specified content to the client.

23. (Currently amended) ~~A system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 22, wherein:

the core server further comprises:

means for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of the specified content; and

means for providing the specified content to the node server; and

the node server further comprises means for receiving the specified content from the core server.

24. (Currently amended) ~~A-system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 22, wherein the core server and the node server are each implemented at least in part in a computer.

25. (Currently amended) ~~A-system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 22, wherein the node server is implemented at least in part in a television set-top box.

26. (Currently amended) ~~A-system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 22, wherein the node server is implemented at least in part in a portable device.

27. (Currently amended) ~~A-system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 22, the system further comprising the client, the client comprising:
means for transmitting the request for the specified content to the core server;
means for receiving the identity of the node server from the core server; and
means for receiving the specified content from the node server.

28. (Currently amended) ~~A-system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 27, wherein the node server and the client are each implemented at least in part in a television set-top box.

29. (Currently amended) ~~A system including an apparatus~~
Apparatus as in Claim 1, ~~wherein the apparatus is a core server,~~
~~the system~~ further comprising the client, the client comprising:
 means for transmitting the request for the specified
content to the core server;
 means for receiving the identity of the node server
from the core server; and
 means for receiving the specified content from the node
server.

30. (Currently amended) ~~A system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 29,
wherein the client further comprises means for transmitting a
request to the node server to transmit the specified content to
the client.

31. (Currently amended) ~~A system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 29,
wherein the client further comprises:
 means for monitoring the characteristics of the
transmission of the specified content from the node server
to obtain auditing information regarding the transmission of
the specified content from the node server to the client;
and
 means for transmitting the auditing information to the
core server.

32. (Currently amended) ~~A-system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 29, wherein the core server and the client are each implemented at least in part in a computer.

33. (Currently amended) ~~A-system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 29, wherein the client is implemented at least in part in a television set-top box.

34. (Currently amended) ~~A-system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 29, wherein the client is implemented at least in part in a portable device.

35-38. (Canceled)

39. (Currently amended) Apparatus for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising a core server.
The core server comprising:

means for receiving a request for content from a client;

means for determining the location of the client within the network;

means for identifying the location of a plurality of node servers within the network that have at least part of the requested content stored thereon;

means for selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that are determined to be topologically proximate to the client;

means for communicating the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the requested content via the network from one or more of the candidate node servers; and

means for ascertaining which of the one or more of the candidate node servers transmitted requested content to the client, wherein an owner of such node server is offered an incentive as compensation for transmission of requested content to the client.

40-55. (Canceled)

56. (Currently amended) Apparatus for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising a core server,
the core server comprising:

means for identifying which of a plurality of sets of content or parts of the plurality of sets of content are stored by each of a plurality of node servers that are part of the network, wherein at least one of the plurality of sets of content or parts of the plurality of sets of content is stored on redundant node servers;

means for receiving a request from a client that is part of the network for transmission of a set of content to the client, wherein at least part of the requested set of content is stored on redundant node servers;

means for selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that have stored thereon at least part of the requested set of content;

means for communicating the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the requested content via the network from one or more of the candidate node servers; and

means for ascertaining which of the one or more of the candidate node servers transmitted requested content to the client, wherein an owner of such node server is offered an incentive as compensation for transmission of requested content to the client.

57-76. (Canceled)

77. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media encoded with one or more computer programs including instructions for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising:

instructions for receiving a request from a client for specified content;

instructions for communicating to the client the identity of a node server having the specified content stored thereon, thereby enabling the client to request transmission of the specified content from the node server; and

instructions for ascertaining that the node server transmitted the specified content to the client, wherein an owner of the node server is offered an incentive as compensation for transmission of the specified content to the client.

78. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 77, wherein the instructions for ascertaining that the node server transmitted the specified content to the client further comprise instructions for obtaining information regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content.

79. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 78, wherein the instructions for obtaining information regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content further comprise instructions for obtaining information regarding when the content was delivered.

80. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 78, wherein the instructions for obtaining information regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content further comprise instructions for obtaining information regarding the bandwidth and/or latency performance associated with the transmission of the content.

81. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 77, further comprising:

instructions for identifying a plurality of node servers within the network that have at least part of the requested content stored thereon;

instructions for selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers; and

instructions for communicating the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the specified content via the network from one or more of the candidate node servers.

82. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 81, further comprising:

instructions for determining the location of the client within the network;

instructions for identifying the locations of the plurality of node servers that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

instructions for identifying the locations of the plurality of node servers that have at least part of the requested content stored thereon;

wherein the instructions for selecting one or more candidate node servers further comprise instructions for selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that are determined to be topologically proximate to the client.

83. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 82, wherein the determination of topological proximity to the client is performed using a breadth-first search to identify node servers that satisfy a criterion regarding topological proximity to the client.

84. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 77, further comprising:

instructions for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of the specified content; and

instructions for providing the specified content to the node server.

85. (Previously presented) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 84, wherein the instructions for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of the specified content further comprise:

instructions for identifying the location of a prospective node server that desires to act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

instructions for identifying the location of one or more other existing node servers that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content; and

instructions for determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers, wherein the prospective node server is selected as a node

server for distribution of the specified content if the prospective node server satisfies a criterion regarding topological proximity to the existing node servers.

86. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 85, wherein the instructions for determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers comprise instructions for performing an annealing method.

87. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 77, further comprising:

instructions for storing data identifying available sets of content that can be obtained by a client; and
instructions for providing an identification of available sets of content to the client.

88. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 77, further comprising instructions for storing data identifying the location of the node server.

89. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 77, further comprising:

instructions for storing content at a node server;
instructions for receiving a request at a node server to transmit content to a client; and

instructions for transmitting content from a node server to a client in response to a request for that content.

90. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 89, further comprising:

instructions for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

instructions for providing the specified content to the node server; and

instructions for receiving at the node server the specified content provided by the core server.

91. (Previously presented) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 89, further comprising:

instructions for transmitting from the client a request for specified content to the core server;

instructions for receiving at the client the identity of a node server from the core server; and

instructions for receiving at the client the specified content from a node server.

92. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 77, further comprising:

instructions for transmitting from the client a request for specified content to the core server;

instructions for receiving at the client the identity of a node server from the core server; and

instructions for receiving at the client the specified content from a node server.

93. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 92, further comprising instructions for transmitting a request from the client to the node server to transmit specified content to the client.

94. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 92, further comprising:

instructions for monitoring the characteristics of the transmission of the specified content from the node server to obtain auditing information regarding the transmission of the specified content from the node server to the client; and

instructions for transmitting the auditing information to the core server.

95-98. (Canceled)

99. (Previously presented) A computer readable storage medium or media encoded with one or more computer programs including instructions for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising:

instructions for receiving a request for content from a client;

instructions for determining the location of the client within the network;

instructions for identifying the location of a plurality of node servers within the network that have at least part of the requested content stored thereon;

instructions for selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that are determined to be topologically proximate to the client;

instructions for communicating the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the requested content via the network from one or more of the candidate node servers; and

instructions for ascertaining which of the one or more of the candidate node servers transmitted requested content to the client, wherein an owner of such node server is offered an incentive as compensation for transmission of requested content to the client.

100-111. (Canceled)

112. (Previously presented) A computer readable storage medium or media encoded with one or more computer programs including instructions for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising:

instructions for identifying which of a plurality of sets of content or parts of the plurality of sets of content are stored by each of a plurality of node servers that are part of the network, wherein at least one of the plurality of sets of content or parts of the plurality of sets of content is stored on redundant node servers;

instructions for receiving a request from a client that is part of the network for transmission of a set of content to the client, wherein at least part of the requested set of content is stored on redundant node servers;

instructions for selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that have stored thereon at least part of the requested set of content;

instructions for communicating the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the requested content via the network from one or more of the candidate node servers; and

instructions for ascertaining which of the one or more of the candidate node servers transmitted requested content to the client, wherein an owner of such node server is offered an incentive as compensation for transmission of requested content to the client.

113-120. (Canceled)

121. (Currently amended) A method for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising the steps of:

identifying at a core server a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of specified content; providing from the core server the specified content to the node server;

receiving at the core server a request from a client for the specified content;

communicating from the core server the identity of the node server to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the specified content from the node server; and

ascertaining at the core server that the node server transmitted the specified content to the client, wherein an owner of the node server is offered an incentive as compensation for transmission of the specified content to the client.

122-123. (Canceled)

124. (Currently amended) Apparatus for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising a core server, the core server comprising:

a receiver, wherein:

the receiver is adapted to receive a request from a client for specified content; and

the receiver is adapted to receive an identification of a node server that transmitted the specified content to the client, wherein an owner of the node server so identified is offered an incentive as compensation for transmission of the specified content to the client; and

a transmitter, wherein the transmitter is adapted to communicate to the client the identity of a node server having the specified content stored thereon, thereby enabling the client to request transmission of the specified content from the node server so identified.

125-127. (Canceled)

128. (Previously presented) Apparatus as in Claim 124, wherein the incentive varies in accordance with the bandwidth and/or latency performance of the node server in transmitting the specified content to the client.

129. (Previously presented) Apparatus as in Claim 128, wherein the incentive varies in accordance with the bandwidth and/or latency performance of the node server relative to the bandwidth and/or latency characteristics of one or more other node servers that can provide the specified content to the client.

130. (Previously presented) Apparatus as in Claim 124, wherein the incentive varies in accordance with the number and/or topological proximity of one or more other node servers that can provide the specified content to the client.

131. (Previously presented) Apparatus as in Claim 124, wherein the incentive varies in accordance with the time of day at which the node server transmits the specified content to the client.

132. (Currently amended) Apparatus as in Claim 124, the core server further comprising computational apparatus, wherein the receiver, transmitter and/or computational apparatus are further adapted to obtain information regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content.

133. (Previously presented) Apparatus as in Claim 132, wherein the information regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content comprises information regarding when the content was delivered.

134. (Previously presented) Apparatus as in Claim 132, wherein the information regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content comprises information regarding the bandwidth and/or latency performance associated with the transmission of the content.

135. (Currently amended) Apparatus as in Claim 124, wherein:

the receiver is further adapted to receive an identification of a plurality of node servers within the network that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

the ~~apparatus~~ core server further comprises computational apparatus adapted to select from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers; and

the transmitter is further adapted to communicate the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the specified content via the network from one of the candidate node servers.

136. (Previously presented) Apparatus as in Claim 135, wherein:

the receiver is further adapted to receive an identification of the locations of the plurality of node servers that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

the receiver, transmitter and/or computational apparatus are further adapted to determine the location of the client within the network; and

the computational apparatus is further adapted to select from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that are determined to be topologically proximate to the client.

137. (Previously presented) Apparatus as in Claim 136, wherein the determination of topological proximity to the client is performed using a breadth-first search to identify node servers that satisfy a criterion regarding topological proximity to the client.

138. (Currently amended) Apparatus as in Claim 124, the core server further comprising computational apparatus, wherein the receiver, transmitter and/or computational apparatus are adapted to identify a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of the specified content, and wherein the transmitter is further adapted to provide the specified content to the node server.

139. (Previously presented) Apparatus as in Claim 138, wherein the computational apparatus is further adapted to i) identify the location of a prospective node server that desires to act as a node server for distribution of the specified content; ii) identify the location of one or more other existing node servers that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content; iii) determine the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers, wherein the prospective node server is selected as a node server for distribution of the specified content if the prospective node server satisfies a criterion regarding topological proximity to the existing node servers.

140. (Previously presented) Apparatus as in Claim 139, wherein the determination of the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers is performed using an annealing method.

141. (Currently amended) Apparatus as in Claim 124, the core server further comprising data storage apparatus for storing data identifying available content that can be obtained by a client, and wherein the transmitter is further adapted to provide an identification of available content to the client.

142. (Currently amended) Apparatus as in Claim 124, the core server further comprising data storage apparatus for ^U^ring data identifying the location of the node server.

143. (Previously presented) Apparatus as in Claim 124, wherein the content comprises visual content including moving images.

144. (Previously presented) Apparatus as in Claim 124, wherein the network is a computer network.

145. (Previously presented) Apparatus as in Claim 144, wherein the network is the Internet.

146. (Previously presented) Apparatus as in Claim 124, wherein the network is a television network.

147. (Previously presented) Apparatus as in Claim 124, wherein the network is a wireless communications network.

148. (Currently amended) ~~A system including an apparatus~~
Apparatus as in Claim 124, ~~wherein the apparatus is a core~~
~~server, the system~~ further comprising the node server, the node
server comprising:

data storage apparatus for storing the specified
content;

a receiver adapted to receive a request to transmit the
specified content to the client; and

a transmitter adapted to transmit the specified content
to the client.

149. (Currently amended) ~~A system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 148,
wherein:

the core server further comprises computational
apparatus adapted to identify a network site that will act
as a node server for distribution of the specified content,
and wherein the transmitter of the core server is further
adapted to provide the specified content to the node server;
and

the ~~transmitter~~ receiver of the node server is further
adapted to receive the specified content from the core
server.

150. (Currently amended) ~~A system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 148, wherein the core server and the node server are each implemented, at least in part, in a computer.

151. (Currently amended) ~~A system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 148, wherein the node server is implemented, at least in part, in a television set-top box.

152. (Currently amended) ~~A system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 148, wherein the node server is implemented, at least in part, in a portable device.

153. (Currently amended) ~~A system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 148, ~~the system~~ further comprising the client, the client comprising:

a transmitter adapted to transmit the request for the specified content to the core server;

a receiver adapted to receive the identity of the node server from the core server and to receive the specified content from the node server.

154. (Currently amended) ~~A system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 153, wherein the node server and the client are each implemented, at least in part, in a television set-top box.

155. (Currently amended) ~~A system including an apparatus~~
Apparatus as in Claim 124, ~~wherein the apparatus is a core~~
~~server, the system~~ further comprising the client, the client
comprising:

a transmitter adapted to transmit the request for the
specified content to the core server;

a receiver adapted to receive the identity of the node
server from the core server and to receive the specified
content from the node server.

156. (Currently amended) ~~A system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 155,
wherein the transmitter of the client is further adapted to
transmit a request to the node server to transmit the specified
content to the client.

157. (Currently amended) ~~A system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 155,
wherein the client further comprises computational apparatus,
wherein the receiver, transmitter and/or computational apparatus
of the client are adapted to monitor the characteristics of the
transmission of the specified content from the node server to
obtain auditing information regarding the transmission of the
specified content from the node server to the client, and wherein
the transmitter of the client is further adapted to transmit the
auditing information to the core server.

158. (Currently amended) ~~A system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 155, wherein the core server and the client are each implemented, at least in part, in a computer.

159. (Currently amended) ~~A system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 155, wherein the client is implemented, at least in part, in a television set-top box.

160. (Currently amended) ~~A system~~ Apparatus as in Claim 159, wherein the client is implemented, at least in part, in a portable device.

161. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 121, wherein the incentive varies in accordance with the bandwidth and/or latency performance of the node server in transmitting the specified content to the client.

162. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 161, wherein the incentive varies in accordance with the bandwidth and/or latency performance of the node server relative to the bandwidth and/or latency characteristics of one or more other node servers that can provide the specified content to the client.

163. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 121, wherein the incentive varies in accordance with the number and/or topological proximity of one or more other node servers that can provide the specified content to the client.

164. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 121, wherein the incentive varies in accordance with the time of day at which the node server transmits the specified content to the client.

165. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 121, wherein the step of ascertaining at the core server that the node server transmitted the specified content to the client comprises the step of obtaining at the core server information regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content.

166. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 165, wherein the step of obtaining information at the core server regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content comprises the step of obtaining information at the core server regarding when the content was delivered.

167. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 165, wherein the step of obtaining information at the core server regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content comprises the step of obtaining information at the core server regarding

the bandwidth and/or latency performance associated with the transmission of the content.

168. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 121, further comprising the steps of:

identifying at the core server a plurality of node servers within the network that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

selecting by the core server from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers; and

communicating from the core server the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the specified content via the network from one of the candidate node servers.

169. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 168, further comprising the steps of:

determining by the core server the location of the client within the network;

identifying at the core server the locations of the plurality of node servers that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content; and

wherein the step of selecting by the core server one or more candidate node servers comprises the step of selecting by the core server from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that are determined to be topologically proximate to the client.

170. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 169, wherein the determination of topological proximity to the client is performed using a breadth-first search to identify node servers that satisfy a criterion regarding topological proximity to the client.

171. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 121, wherein the step of identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of the specified content further comprises the steps of:

identifying at the core server the location of a prospective node server that desires to act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

identifying at the core server the location of one or more other existing node servers that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

determining by the core server the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers, wherein the prospective node server is selected as a node server for distribution of the specified content if the prospective node server satisfies a criterion regarding topological proximity to the existing node servers.

172. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 171, wherein the step of determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers is performed using an annealing method.

173. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 121, further comprising the steps of:

storing at the core server data identifying available content that can be obtained by a client; and
providing from the core server an identification of available content to the client.

174. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 121, further comprising the step of storing at the core server data identifying the location of the node server.

175. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 121, wherein the content comprises visual content including moving images.

176. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 121, wherein the network is a computer network.

177. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 176, wherein the network is the Internet.

178. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 121, wherein the network is a television network.

179. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 121, wherein the network is a wireless communications network.

180. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 121, ~~wherein the steps of identifying a network site that will act as a node server, providing the specified content to the node server, receiving a request from a client for the specified content, communicating the identity of the node server to the client, and ascertaining that the node server transmitted the specified content to the client are performed by a core server, the method~~ further comprising the following steps performed by a node server of:

storing at the node server the specified content;
receiving at the node server a request to transmit the specified content to the client; and
transmitting from the node server the specified content to the client.

181. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 180, ~~wherein the steps performed by the node server further comprise~~ comprising the step of receiving at the node server the specified content from the core server.

182. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 180, wherein the steps performed by the core server and the steps performed by the node server are each implemented, at least in part, in a computer.

183. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 180, wherein the steps performed by the node server are implemented, at least in part, in a television set-top box.

184. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 180, wherein the steps performed by the node server are implemented, at least in part, in a portable device.

185. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 181, ~~the method further comprising the following steps performed by a client of:~~

transmitting from a client the request for the specified content to the core server;

receiving at the client the identity of the node server from the core server; and

receiving at the client the specified content from the node server.

186. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 185, wherein the steps performed by the node server and the steps performed by the client are each implemented, at least in part, in a television set-top box.

187. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 121, wherein ~~the steps of identifying a network site that will act as a node server, providing the specified content to the node server, receiving a request from a client for the specified content, communicating the identity of the node server to the client, and ascertaining that the node server transmitted the specified content to the client are performed by a core server, the method~~ further comprising the following steps ~~performed by a client of:~~

transmitting from the client the request for the specified content to the core server;

receiving at the client the identity of the node server from the core server; and

receiving at the client the specified content from the node server.

188. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 187, wherein ~~the steps performed by the client further comprise~~ comprising the step of transmitting from the client a request to the node server to transmit the specified content to the client.

189. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 187, wherein ~~the steps performed by the client further comprise~~ comprising the steps of:

monitoring by the client the characteristics of the transmission of the specified content from the node server to obtain auditing information regarding the transmission of

the specified content from the node server to the client;
and

transmitting from the client the auditing information
to the core server.

190. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 187,
wherein the steps performed by the core server and the steps
performed by the client are each implemented, at least in part,
in a computer.

191. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 187,
wherein the steps performed by the client are implemented, at
least in part, in a television set-top box.

192. (Previously presented) A method as in Claim 187,
wherein the steps performed by the client are implemented, at
least in part, in a portable device.